



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MAN PLEADS TO FEDERAL PIPE BOMB CHARGES

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that Rommel "Rick" Sanchez pled guilty today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Pamela Mathy to being a felon in possession of a pipe bomb and crack cocaine charges.

In pleading guilty, Sanchez admitted that he distributed 2 ounces of crack cocaine a day from Summer 2006 to March 2007, resulting in approximately 10 kilograms being distributed in a 6 month period. His codefendant Reinaldo Franco also distributed crack cocaine for him. Franco, also admitted to the distribution of crack on a daily basis for Sanchez from October 2006 to on or about April 13, 2007. Each day, Franco received 2 to 3 ounces of cocaine powder from Sanchez and made cocaine base, crack, with Sanchez's knowledge.

Sanchez had previously been convicted of a felony, aggravated robbery with a deadly weapon, and thus is prohibited by law from possessing any type of weapon, including a pipe bomb. According to the defendant's own testimony, as well as that of eyewitnesses, the defendant possessed a pipe bomb that he had his associates place under the vehicle of Reinaldo Franco on or about March 28, 2007. The San Antonio Police Department counter-charged the bomb and as a result it did not detonate.

Sanchez faces up to 10 years in federal prison on the crack cocaine charge and up to 10 years on the pipe bomb charge.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and the San Antonio Police Department. It is being prosecuted for the government by Assistant United States Attorney Mark T. Roomberg.

The prosecution of this case is another example of how the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas is carrying out the Department of Justice's gun crime initiative - Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN). Project Safe Neighborhoods is a nationwide federal initiative designed to reduce gun violence in our communities. PSN promotes partnerships among federal, state, and local law enforcement to target criminals in possession of guns. Federal law insures that when an armed criminal is arrested, that individual will face swift criminal prosecution and be exiled from the community through the use of stiff mandatory prison sentences.

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